



President's Message: Change of Focus

This March issue should have been filled with the anticipation felt by 16,000 Manitoba teachers and this province as a collective. It was to be the eve of the final report and recommendations from the commissioners tasked with the K-12 Education Review. The report and the potential “sweeping, systematic changes to the education system” it was set to unleash, has consumed teachers and clinicians, and those who represent us, for over a year. It just doesn’t seem that important right now.

On March 18, Minister Goertzen announced that the province was pushing back implementing the recommendations due to the battle being faced by all citizens, due to the Covid-19 virus pandemic.

"There are many excellent recommendations in the K-12 commission report but even excellent recommendations are difficult to implement in uncertain times. That is why we will not be implementing significant changes recommended in the report until at least summer of 2021." It's unclear how long the province is putting the results on hold.

News updates, facts and instructions surrounding the virus continue to be fluid, and teachers across this province began a new reality this week. The Manitoba Teachers’ Society called on the provincial government to follow the Public Health Officer’s direction on social distancing by allowing educators to work from home. The government responded with the following,

"We are encouraging school divisions to follow health advice. Teachers, support staff and other personnel should be allowed to work at home, if at all possible."

So here we are. A new reality in education. As I reflect back on the past week (that seemed 25 days long), education in this province has indeed, and out of necessity, gone through “sweeping changes.” But one constant remains. Interlake teachers will work with and for students on a personal and genuine level. We will help and guide them and their parents through at-home learning, and we will do it in as many unique ways as can be thought of. I am truly honoured to see the work done by ITA teachers always, but in these past few days, especially. I applaud you for all you do, and will do, in what are sure to be uncertain days ahead. Know that you have the support of your Principal if you have programming or school-based questions. Know that you have the support of MTS, as staff officers are available and EAP will still triage and remotely work with members. Reach out to me at president@interlaketeachers.ca when you have questions regarding member rights or concerns.

We may have just shown this entire province our finest hours, but there is far more for them to witness. We will continue to remind them through our work with our students and their families in the days and weeks to come. The evidence will not always be heralded by way of posts, feeds or online teams. Rather, our innate need to foster learning and inspiration in our students will be evident in the familiar faces, stronger minds and fuller hearts that we WILL see once again, on the other side of this pandemic. They know we are still there for them; they see us working for them, so they will try hard in return. The only thing they probably won’t know,... is how much we are going to miss them. Be well and stay safe.

In the News & Important Documents:

All LINKS on this page can be found with one click on [www.interlaketeachers.ca!](http://www.interlaketeachers.ca)

- Provincial Education Funding as it Impacts Each Division – [LINK](#)
- Interlake School Division Budget-At-Glance Document - [LINK](#)
- MB Government Mandate Letter to Minister of Education, released March 3: [LINK](#)

- Click this [LINK](#) for the MTS Guide to Working at Home for Teachers.
 - This is a very thorough document with many links. I recommend taking some time to read it through, but in manageable bits when you have time. **It specifies our professional responsibilities**, and gives suggestions and links to access Health Links online screening tool, how to donate blood, and tips for working during this time.

- MTS daily updates: <http://www.mbteach.org/mtscms/2020/03/12/what-you-need-to-know/>
 - This page is continually being updated and has much info for, literally,... “What you need to know”! Included are links to updates, news releases, communication from MTS President, James Bedford, travel info and the list grows each day.

- MTS coverage of Covid-19 developments continues with this two-page PDF produced for members. Click here for “[10 FAQs for Manitoba Teachers](#)”.

- MTS Public Relations sent: **Winnipeg Free Press provides brilliant homage to Manitoba teachers**:

Maggie Macintosh, the new WFP education reporter, has just produced the single most flattering portrait of public school teachers in the K-12 system that I've ever read. A huge project with a short timeline, this piece shows the hard work, joy and human face of teachers. The photos by photographer Ruth Bonneville are a dream. A huge boost as we head into the next three weeks.

Link is here: <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/education-special-568917622.html>
Title of the Article is: Learning swerve - The Free Press travels from kindergarten to Grade 12 with passionate educators who find innovative, inclusive ways to deliver Manitoba's public-school curriculum so it matters to an increasingly diverse student population



➤ UP-COMING EVENTS:

- **ITA Annual General Meeting** – The Interlake Teachers' Association AGM will take place **Tuesday, April 21, 4:30 pm at SCI**. Agenda items include Guest Speaker MTS Vice-President – Nathan Martindale, election of the executive, passing of the budget, setting of fees and reflection on the year in review and what lies ahead for ITA. Members will be updated as soon as possible, should this date be postponed.

- **Retirement dates:** Members have until April 30 (if hired on or after December 7, 2004) or May 31 (if hired before December 7, 2004) to give their retirement notice for June 30. Direct your intentions to the Superintendent, as soon as possible in any case. See TRAF information below.



TEACHERS' RETIREMENT
ALLOWANCES FUND

TRAF has been continuously monitoring the developments related to the COVID-19 outbreak, including the latest advice of Canada's public health officials. As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, TRAF is taking additional precautionary measures to ensure the safety of its members and staff.

Starting Monday, March 23, 2020, TRAF will be suspending all in-person member appointments until further notice. Our staff will remain available by phone to answer all of your pension-related questions.

All members who have scheduled an appointment with us in March or April will be contacted regarding their upcoming appointment:

- **Members who are planning to retire by the end of June 2020 will be given the option to continue with their scheduled appointment time by phone, or cancel their appointment and reschedule at a later date when in-person appointments resume (We will post updates when available on our website).**
- **Appointments for members who are contemplating a retirement date later than June 2020 will be cancelled at this time.**

TRAF continues to monitor the situation and will advise you of any changes that may arise.

Please contact our office if you have any questions at 204-949-0048 or toll-free at 800-782-0714 or by emailing info@traf.mb.ca.

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We can still be together, although we are apart. Reach out to colleagues and friends, take time for your family, and we will see you soon.